

CAMP NEAR MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE.

March 20th, 1863.

Respected Sisters:-

I received your welcome letter which was mailed on the 12th. of this month. You seem to think that if you was down here you would have something to write about. I guess the history of our proceedings of the last three days will be as interesting as any thing I can think of at present. On the 18th. which was my birthday, this division and Sheridans' moved camp. Our division lies west of town, our battery being nearest the town. Our tents are within ten paces of the railroad, on which five trains run each way every day. It seems a little like civilization to hear the cars whistle so frequently. The reason of our moving back is not satisfactorily settled in my mind. All the forces at this point have been drawn in near the fortifications which are very numerous and of such strength that I think fifty thousand can hold the place against one hundred thousand. There is a prevalent belief in this camp that the rebels are getting reinforced. The papers also intimate that they will evacuate Vicksburg and come here. The 19th was spent in our camp for a few weeks stay. We also cleaned up our harness guns, and etc. for inspection. Today the 20th. has been a day that will not be forgotten by the thousands of this army. It had threatened rain all day but it now eight o'clock and we have only had enough to lay the dust so it rather assisted us in performances of the day, then hindering us. Our division was reviewed by General Rosecrans and it was by far the finest review I ever witnessed, though the regiments are very small, and the three batteries are only four gun batteries. Among the prominent officers present were Gen. Rosecrans, Gen. McCook, Gen. Garfield, Gen. Johnson. Col. Gibson is the acting Brigadier Gen. from the 1st. Brigade. Every thing went off very satisfactorily to me and I think to all of the rest. Gen. Rosy is a very good natured looking man. He is six feet in height, roman nose, black hair. Light complexioned, beard all of his face, is rather a portly man. Looks as though he was about forty-five years of age. Dresses very plain and wears the regulation hat. He spoke about Bill Bates and Addis Britton being at home. I am in hopes that the conscription will catch them before they get out of the state. I heard of a row in camp. It was that some dutch resisted when the U.S. officer came to get some deserters. There is a class of men in Stark county who ought to stretch hemp. About one on each lamp post in Canton would be a good riddance to the county.

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I cannot say that I like a soldiers life very much but I am ashamed of the way men act who are home enjoying all the comforts of life. What affected me the most of any thing I have read was the letter to Cyrus Maxwell. He used to talk very patriotic as well as other, when it was fashion to raise men for the army by volunteering. He used to say that he had a notion to go and went so far as to ask advice of others. As soon as there was a talk of a draft he began to cool down. What does he say now after the conscript act has passed? He says he thought he would be a fit subject, but he had made up his mind that he could not go without they come and took him by force. I am sorry that men can get out by the payment of two hundred dollars. I hope to God that some of such men do get brought out and had to march the road over about three times between Louisville and Alabama. There has a train just come in with four new guns for our battery. We are to turn over two that we have got. So we will have a six gun battery again; four twelve pounders and two six pounder James guns. They are giving furloughs. About two hundred of our brigade started today. Five would have gone from the battery but their paroles were not made out correct. The married men get to go first. I thought that Miss Louisa B. stepped out quite sly though I may not know all that is going on at home. No more at present.

From your brother,
A. S. Bloomfield.

CAMP AT MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE.

March, 31st, 1863.

Respected Sister:-

I received your letter dated the 22nd. Of this month. I have not received the letter that you said Gertrude had written me. Here comes the Sargent of the guard and I must go on guard-----Off guard again.

While on guard the mail came and I have the letter that Gertrude wrote. This will have to do as an answer to both. Have not received the letter that Celestine and Ella wrote. From what you say I think you have been enjoying yourselves some of the time, especially, when you were sugaring off. I do not hardly think they could surprise our camp and take us all prisoners. You would need a heavier force. I have no doubt but your horses could cope with any that are in the United States service. I am sorry to hear that Thomas has been unwell. From what I have heard I suppose there will be no one shed tears when Charley family moves. What was the trouble if it is no secret? You say there is nothing going on. That may be so but I think there are a good many parties going off. You wanted to know what L. B. Maxwell was about. I hardly understand what you want to know. You say you heard so many different stories what he was. He is acting Sargent in R. Roggers place since the fight. He was corporal before the fight and his post in an engagement was gunner. I cannot say when we are going to move, but we are preparing. We have drawn our shelter camps. Every man has to carry his own tent. This place is being very strongly fortified. I have seen six of the guns that have been placed in the finished fortifications. Four of them are twenty-four pounders, are rifled and will shoot five miles. They are ten feet long and weight nearly three ton. The others are eight inch howitzers and are used to throw shell and grape. I think we will soon be fixed here so we can entertain the rebels with plenty of union music when they come. We can carry on all of the parts.

It has been quite cold here for several days. snowed a little yesterday and today. It was just one year ago today since we crossed Duck river at Columbia. And one year tomorrow we started for Shiloh. I must tell you what the first thing would be that would draw your attention. If you would come into this place on the cars you would see five monstrous piles of crackers. They are higher than our house and I think if the five piles were together they would make a pile as large again as our barn.

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Every man gets off the cars goes around them looking up with his mouth wide open. Nearly every house in the place is filled with government stores. There is a pile of meat larger than our house, besides flour, hay, corn, coffee, rice, sugar, salt, tea, vinegar, etc. etc. They say there are ninety days rations here. There are two trains used here now in drawing the rations back from the station inside of the fortification, which are about one mile and a half from town in a north west direction.

If one family of ten persons had these rations to eat they would last them 2465 years. We have some infantry detailed to fill up our battery. I see in todays daily paper that a soldier was shot in Indianapolis for desertion. That is what will bring some of them to terms. The report is now that furloughs are played out. There was some talk of our division going back to Kentucky. General Ruseau's division is going.

I learn this evening that General Johnson has command of this post so it is likely we will be left here for some time. It is very cold and wintry this evening. No more at present.

From your affectionate brother,

A. S. Bloomfield.

CAMP AT MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE.

April, 11th, 1863.

Respected Sister:-

I received the letter that Celestine wrote me which she mailed at Alliance on April 1st, some four or five days ago, and I also got that one she spoke about which Cena sent hers in. It was the first one you wrote after you heard I got out of the fight safe. Our brigade and battery has been out on picket and guard for five days and just got in last evening. We have a very pleasant time. It did not rain any and it was warm like spring. We were out four miles west of this place. The brigade is stationed there all the time. Sometimes a whole division. It is to avoid a flank movement. Things are very quiet here at present. There was a man around this camp selling Union songs and postage stamps. He claimed to be sent on this mission by the government and that he had been throughout the eastern armies. He said he hailed from Portland, Maine.

A few days ago General Rosecrans had him arrested for a spy and after a search of him they found a draft of the fortifications of this place in his boot sole. He was put under guard. A few nights ago he undertook to break guard and was shot dead on the spot. Old Rosy has sentenced three men in this army to be shot publicly. One for killing his orderly Sargeant with a bayonet. One for desertion, another for deserting and going into the rebels lines and returning as a spy for them. One was shot yesterday, the other two are to be on the fourteenth. Rosy is just the man for me and for this government. I am glad to hear that Thomas is all right again. It would be a curious match if Billy and Het were to get married. I cannot believe that they will. You spoke about the copper heads. One thing they had better keep out of the soldier's clutches. There is no use for them to kick up a muss for this army is for the Union and they cannot make us dis-union. I saw the particulars concerning the row in camp. We have been paid off today for two months. I shall send some money in this letter. You can give it to Father. I do not think we will be paid again for six or eighth months. Spring is very backward here. I must write to Cena. No more at present,

From your brother,
A. S. Bloomfield.

CAMP AT MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE.

April, 11th, 1863.

Respected Sister:-

I received your long looked for letter. I often wondered why you did not write some to me, and I suppose you wonder why I do not write to you. I was surprised to see how you had learned to write. You say that anything would be news to any one would be news to you. We are having pretty good times now. We are drawing soft bread and today we got a mess of potatoes and half a pickle a piece. These are some of the soldiers' nick-nacks. Our sutler has apple butter but we have to pay four dollars a gallon for the poorest kind. Apples when they are to be had are ten cents a piece. When we leave this place and start out on another march we had to leave our tents, but we have gotten what we call dog tents. The governments calls them shelter tents. Each man has to carry his own. We can button two together and then they are about the size of a large table cloth and not any thicker.

You spoke about the sugar cakes you sent me. They were very good. I wish I could have been at home this spring to help make sugar. Yesterday one of the trains that left here was captured between here and LaVerne. There was one hundred and fifty thousand dollars captured. It belonged to one of the brigades in this division. It is afternoon and there has no train arrived yet. I am almost afraid to send money in this letter. There is almost always a calm after a storm and they will not be apt to make another dash on this road again for some time. What little news we get in the papers of late is very good. I am beginning to think we can see the end of this war. The health in general is very good in this department. Lewis says you have grown so much that I would hardly know you. Write again. No more at present.

From your brother,

A. S. Bloomfield.

CAMP DRAKE, MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE.

April, 19th, 1863.

Respected Sisters:-

I received your welcome letter dated the 13th. of this month. One week ago today I wrote a letter and put twenty dollars in it. Am going to put six more in this one. Four of us sent a box to William Walker with our over coats in. We sent it by express. Some of you can get mine when you hear that they have arrived. You need not look for them before the first of June. Vegetation is about twelve days later this season than last. The apple trees are in full bloom. This part of the army is uncommonly quiet at present. Our fortifications are progressing finely. We are daily expecting to hear of the capture of Charleston. If reports are true half of the rebels are in very destitute condition. This army was never in a better condition. Plenty of rations here and at Nashville to last us six months. I am afraid the Mississippi will not be cleared this year. It is no easy matter to get the rebels out of the port. They can fight as well as any men. The north may think they are slow down at Vicksburg and Port Hudson. So it does seem but let some one go and examine the strong fort and they can see some of the disadvantages xxxx we have to labor under. I am as well as common.

From your affectionate brother,

A. S. Bloomfield.

CAMP AT MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE.

Monday, April, 27th, 1863.

Dear Sister:-

I received your letter that you wrote on the 19th. about two hours ago. I am well at present. There are no prospects of moving yet. Our mounted infantry went out to McManville day before yesterday and surprised a small rebel force, capturing them. One hundred and thirty-five of them were sent north today. They were objects of pity every one of them. I think the yanks are getting the upper hand of the rebels in every state and all the way along the line. It is raining very hard at the present time accompanied with heavy thunder and vivid lightning. The trees are all leaved out. Grass is an article unknown to one that does not get outside of the picket. As for gardens I have noticed but one, which we call old Rosy's garden. It contains fifty acres or more. He has contrabands cultivating it and the vegetables are to go to the hospitals. It seems to me that there have been an unusual number of deaths since I came away from home. Cena, I am very much pleased with your letter but there is always a chance to improve. Next time you write do not put in the word "well" so often. I makes hundreds of mistakes but you are younger and now is your time to improve. We are living very well. Have pickles every day. They are given to the soldiers to prevent scurvey. We have tea about once a week, also potatoes. Our orderly sargeant, Erlin F. Shaw, of Franklin, Portage county, and Major Cotter, have gone home to recruit for the batteries in this corps. I suppose that the people think at home they have to pay higher prices for thing and of course lay it to the war, but the ones that grumble at prices at home ought to live in Nashville. These two sheets pertaining to things around this place may be more interesting to Father and Thomas than you so you will excuse me for not writing more for the time. Give my respects to all enquiring friends.

From your brother,

A. S. Bloomfield.

The space inside of the forts is over one mile each way. I have not represented one half of the croops and turns in the breastworks. They are over eight miles in length if straightened out. The ditch will average eight by ten feet. The breast works are in most place ten feet high. Ten feet on top and twenty feet on the bottom. Every shovel full of dirt is well hammered down with wooden malls. The inside of the breast works where the infantry stands to fire is built up square with rolls of cedar brush and canes which are in rolls about ten feet long and seven inches thick. They are bound together with telegraph wires. They look very nice and it keeps the earth from washing, and if balls were to go through the slivers will not fly so bad as though they were timber or plank. Those little wings that I have marks on the inside of No. 12 and 21 forts, are square pieces of dirt from eight to fifteen feet in height, and ten feet thick. They have those rolls of cedar brush all around there. They are about four feet higher than the breast works that they shoot over. They are built to catch the balls from the enemy's guns. So you see it will be impossible for them to get a cross fire on the forts that will take effect until they know down these piers. Those things inside of the fort are this shape, and are bum proof stockades. The outside line is heavy oak timber hewn of three sides. They are about ten feet high. The timber is twenty four by thirty inches. They are set up end ways and firmly secured by heavy timber. The top is first covered over with four inch plank and then about three feet of dirt. In the sides are port holes for infantry to fire through. It would be almost impossible to dislodge infantry from them. They are but little higher than breastworks. The size of them are on an average, forty feet each way. The timber is all cut for two miles each way. The lay of the ground is but very little more rolling than it is for two miles around home. There is about one-tenth of the surface that nothing grows on being lime stone rock. There is a space here of six miles square that there is no more than rails enough to fence it. There are a few pens of an acre or so each that we keep cattle and mules in. The government is running one of the steam mills here and are using the rails for fuel. The rails are all cedar and would be worthy fifty cents a piece in Cleveland. Old Rosy has about fifty acres plowed near the convalescent camp for garden. He is going to put the contrabands to work on it to raise vegetables for the hospital. He believes in keeping all hands at work on something. There are two pretty strong stockades on Stewarts Creek. One at the pike bridge and one at the railroad bridge.

They are seven miles from Murfreesborough. At Lavergne there is a strong fort but small. It would enable one brigade to hold twenty thousand for a day at bay. There are similar forts at every bridge on the road. On every train there is one car for the guards. They are planked up on the sides and ends with three inch oak planks with port holes to shoot through. I saw one today that looked like a lamb monitor. It had a wooden turret, that is a little higher than the car. It was large enough for one piece of artillery. Today there was another saw mill came down on the cars all ready to put up. It will be running in a few days. The one that is up runs day and night. The man that has the engineering to do at this place says the work has only fairly begun. I think the help at this place would be good if there were not so many dead horses and mules around. There are also several slaughter yards.

There are five thousand inside of the picket lines. Would not be surprised if there were twice that many. Please take care of these two sheets. This is a rebellious document but I trust that it will get in no hands but those that are laboring for the same cause that I am.

A. S. Bloomfield.

- No. 1----- Nashville and Murforsborough pike.
- No. 2----- The N. and C. R.R.
- No. 3----- Salem pike.
- No. 4----- Pike running east.
- No. 5----- Lebanon pike.
- No. 6 ----- Town of Murforsborough. formerly contained 8,000 inhabitants. Buildings principally brick. Two steam flouring mills. One seminary, one brewery, and court house.
- No. 7----- Stone river. The stream twenty yards.
- No. 8----- A small stream that flows from a large spring.
- No. 9----- (
- No. 10----- (The rail road building, but poor shells.
- No. 11----- Fort nearest town, which has two heavy eight inch howitzers, and places for any quantity of light artillery.
- No. 12----- Heavy guns.
- No. 13----- Fort on the highest ground, mount 4-32 lb. Rifle pieces.
- No. 14----- A magazine in a rocky gulley.
- No. 15----- New station for government stores. 30 X 500 ft. with a switch for cars.
- No. 16----- An unfinished fort.
- No. 17----- Fort on the same ground where the rebels had a small one. No yet finished.
- No. 18----- Similar works nearly finished.
- No. 19----- Steam saw mill. Circular saw put up by the Pioneer Brig.
- No. 20----- New building to put supplies in. 40 X 200 ft. At this point there is a side track on both sides of the road, and about one acre of platform made out of cedar poles.
- No. 21 & 22--- Fortifications nearly finished.
- No. 23----- A six mile pike which fords the river.
- No. 24----- A shape of our battle line on the morning of the 31st. of December, 1862. The right was driven clear across the pike and changed our lines to nearly parallel with the pike. The heaviest of the fight was along the left on the bank of the river.
- No. 25----- Tan Yard. The rebels left one and a half million dollars worth of leather hardly dressed.
- No. 26----- General McCook's head quarters.
- No. 27----- A very poor rebel fortification. Mostly leveled.
- No. 28----- The camp of Battery A, 1st. Regiment, O.V.L.A.
- No. 29----- A small fortification.
- No. 30----- Convalescent camp of several thousand.

CAMP DRAKE, MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE.

May, 6th, 1863.

Respected Sister:-

I received the letter that you wrote on the 30th. of last month. I cannot see how it takes mail longer for mail to reach you from here than it does for mail to reach this point. I will try to answer your questions as well as circumstances will allow me to do. As for the high prices for cotton goods south of our lines you know as much about it as I. At Nashville calico is only fifty cents per yard. A good pair of boots, ten dollars. As for hoops the wealthy wear them. The poor are as a general thing very poor and do with out. The negroe population fare better than the poor whites because they are nearly all in the employ of the government. The wealthy portion of the people have as a general thing gone north to the Union and south if of southern principles. John Fox was telling me about his Fathers sparking up Eliza R. He did not seem to be very much set up about it. Our battery and brigade just came in from picket duty yesterday. We were out five miles west for five days. There was also a batallion of the 4th. Ohio cavalry with us. During the five days on post ten rebel deserters came inside of our lines besides quite a number of refugees. One day two small companies of the cavalry went out over ten miles to where they knew the rebels had the cavalry out post station, and tried to capture them. There were thirty on the post. As soon as our men got into sight they lit out. Their horses were fresh and ours somewhat jaded. After a tramp of ten or twelve miles which enabled most of them to escape, our party captured three and came into camp without a scratch. They were pitiful looking objects. They having scarcely a piece of garment on them that had any wool in it.

Some were barefooted other hatless. I saw one with a shirt on made out of a piece of carpet. He said he left a pair of boots in camp that he paid fifty dollars for. The government charges us four dollars for boots of the same quality. Another had a very poor quality of rubber coat for which he said he paid eighteen dollars. We can get better for three dollars.

Their rations are cornmeal and sow belly. We are getting what I call good rations now, though some will grumble. All but those who make themselves miserable are in good cheer. Troops seem to be active everywhere but in this department. We are not altogether inactive. We had our big spree last New Year.

The papers tell nothing definite as what General Hooker has done yet, only that he has possession of Fredericksburg.

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He captured five thousand prisoners, sixteen pieces of artillery. I think, before the fourth of July, our men will have possession of Vicksburg, Fort Hudson, Charleston and maybe their whole City of Richmond, and who knows but the whole southern confederacy. surrounded, and it can be only a question of time. Today is a very wet disagreeable day.

No more at present,

From your brother,

A. S. Bloomfield.

CAMP DRAKE, MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE.

May, 11th, 1863.

Respected Sister:-

I received your welcome letter of the 6th. about three hours ago. The exciting news that you received has reached this part of the world. I think we get news from the Louisville about one day later than you can get it from Cleveland or New York. This morning's Nashville Union came out with a dispatch in it stating that our flag floated over the rebel capitol, that Hooper had crossed the Raphohanack and was close on the rebels heels. Hooker had eight days rations with him.

Stoneman's raid was one of the most successful dashes that our cavalry has ever made. and from all accounts they did as well, if not better, than one could have expected. Yesterday at eleven o'clock a telegraph dispatch came to Gen. Rosecrans stating that our flag gloated over the rebel's capitol. It was sent around to every division. I suppose you think it would raise quite an excitement in this army, and so it would a year ago. There was but little cheering, but one could look in any direction and see groups of soldiers conversing on the probability of its being true. Hardly a man believe it. I think it will revive the spirits of the eastern army to gain a decided victory. Wont the copperheads draw in their horns a little now? One thing that proves to me that our men are getting the better of them is the fall of gold. The news continues good from Mississippi and Louisiana. Glad to hear that you are having a good spring for doing spring work. Invest that money in whatever you think best. I send \$10.00 more in this letter. We have signed the payrolls again but cannot say how soon we will get the green backs. I do not spend all of my money, if I do not send it home. I have over a hundred dollars in my pocket. Did you ever get that money that W. Hatcher owed you. Charley got a letter from you today. I think there will be some prospects of the rebels whipping us when they commence and partly finish one of the greatest railroads in the country, but it is right to the contrary. What few roads they have are in poor condition and always were. They have poor rolling stock on the road (the old stock from northern roads), and worst of all to them, they are about worn out and cannot import or make any more. One of the engines used on this road is the old Capital Slater off the C. & P. R.R. One of the first engines I ever saw.

Dr. Joseph Woods is in charge of No. 5 hospital of this place. Edward Savage is hired by the government and is in the same room. Work still goes on lively around the forts. There is a large spring, or rather basin in the rocks near here which our men

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are blasting out for the magazines. A few days ago eleven dead rebels rose to the top and some of the men rather turned up their noses at the thought of drinking butternut tea.

There are several think that makes me think that this army will not advance for a long time. One is that Burnside's will take possession of eastern Tennessee and get in supporting distance with his army and then we can work in unison with each other. Another think is very probable in my mind that a very small force of mounted men, say thirty or forty thousand can harass and tear up railroads and burn bridges in their rear until they will have to fall back on the south side of the Tennessee river to Chattanooga. I know one thing our division teams were ordered to load up eight days rations today. This looks a little suspicious. Old Rosy is one of those generals who keeps his plans to himself. David Cavinder has come from home. I remain your affection son,

A. S. Bloomfield.

CAMP DRAKE, MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE.

May, 14, 1863.

Respected Sister:-

I received your welcome letter you wrote on the 8th. stating that you had sent me a box. You seem to think the box might get here at the same time as the letter, but I do not look for it before the 20th. of this month. What put you in the notion of sending a box? I shall feel very thankful for it if I ever get the box. I received Father's letter and answered in on the 11th. and put \$20.00 in money in it. I also received a letter from Uncle William Bloomfield yesterday. I think from what he says about southern Illinois that there is not a strong Union feeling there. He seems to be a little discouraged about affairs in general. This army has been very anxious ever since they left their homes that the rebels might be driven out of their capitol. We hear a great deal about the splendid army of the Potomac, and about twice every year they get ready and start for the rebel stronghold, but they have always failed to occupy the place. This time they fall back and say they were whipping them all the time, and had not more than one third of their force engaged. I believe that General Rosecrans will lead the army yet and will take Richmond. I wonder why they do not fight like the western army? Go in for all that is out every time. They have plenty of men and get a very good portion of them killed. It always seemed to me that they fought by note. Things are progressing admirably here. Every day adds strength to this place. There has been several new forts commenced lately. I do not think Rosy would fear the whole rebel army. I cannot say as there are any signs of moving at present. We have battery drill nearly every day. It is quite cool and pleasant today on account of a very heavy shower of rain last night. The health of the old soldiers is uncommonly good at this time. Some of the new recruits and drafted men are sick. They all thought they would die or get killed when they left home and it seems to me they try and make it come out true. I supposed the conscription act will be put into force in Ohio soon. I put \$15.00 in this that you may hand to Father. I must go. Water call has been blown. We have the following calls: Reville at early dawn; ten minutes later assembly for roll call; 3rd. feed call; 4th. breakfast call; 5th. sick call; 6th. water call; 7th. stable call; 8th. guard mounting; 9th. noon roll call; 10th feed call; 11th water call; 13th stable duty; 14th supper call; 15th six o'clock roll call; 16th feed call; 17th roll call at 8:30; 18th taps. I have left

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out one, that is dinner call. There are this many every day and when we have hay to feed there are two more. For violating any of these rules, that is being absent, we have the pleasure of standing six hours guard at night. second offence, double dose of guard duty. You may think this is pretty strick, so it is. But it is very easy to live up to the rules if one tries, and such ones can always get leave of absences for six or eight hours. No more to night.

From your brother,
A. S. Bloomfield.